PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 5
Answered on 10th October, 2024
First Meeting 2024-2025 Session - Third Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

MS. BARBARA CONOLLY, NP, JP, MP – DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY OF GEORGE TOWN SOUTH

TO

THE HON. ANDRÉ EBANKS, DEPUTY PREMIER AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES & COMMERCE *AND* INVESTMENT, INNOVATION & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister advise the House whether the Government intends to reopen the Older Persons Active Ageing Centre, formerly located on MacLendon Drive, which was closed following the 2021 general elections?

ANSWER:

The Older Persons Active Ageing Centre (the "OPAAC") was established as a multi-agency centre where, particularly the Department of Children and Family Services (the "DCFS") and the Needs Assessment Unit (the "NAU") at the time, were to offer services to older persons in the Cayman Islands.

Following the 2021 election, the DCFS and the NAU advised of several challenges with the facility, such as its lack of access to confidential spaces due to open ceilings and thin inner walls, the lack of accessible washrooms, as well as challenges from a human resource perspective to keep facility staffed when there was not a significant uptake of the service. There were also concerns with meeting building codes and ensuring the safety of older persons as the emergency exit area was blocked by air conditioning units. Further, older persons accessing these services prefer to access them locally in their districts or even their homes.

The aforementioned challenges rendered the space unsuitable, at that time, for service delivery through DCFS and NAU. The Ministry then considered a number of options regarding how the premises could best be utilised. The two leading options were:

1. an interested private sector business that offered to sublet the premises, which would have allowed the Ministry to conserve its operational budget with respect to spending money renting the premises, and at the end of the sublet, the Ministry would have been returned an improved rental property; or
2. the opportunity to collaborate with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage which offered to become a sub-tenant as it had sufficient funding to renovate the premises, resolve the structural issues and work in partnership with my Ministry.

Accordingly, in the spirit of working as one Government, then Minister Bernie Bush and I agreed that the premises which was previously named OPAAC would be transitioned to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage. We worked in partnership with them to ensure that the space would be used to deliver programmes for older persons. As a result, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage successfully rebranded and developed this space into the Inter-Generational Hub (the "Hub"). As publicly reported, The Hub was re-opened by this Government on 20 October 2023 (which had a beautiful and soulful opening launch event that day) as a space for older persons and youth to learn from one another and further enshrine Cayman's heritage in the community.

My Ministry has been working closely with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage, using this space to deliver programmes to bring people together and enhance the spirit of community. The Minister for Youth, Sports and Heritage has confirmed that activities for older persons are being offered frequently (sometimes weekly in a particular month).